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BYLC launches month-long youth leadership program in Dhaka

Dhaka – Today, Bangladesh Youth Leadership Center (BYLC) held the inaugural ceremony of its second month-long leadership training program, ‘Building Bridges through Leadership Training’, at the Bangladesh Institute of Administration and Management (BIAM) Foundation.

Professor A A M S Arefin Siddique, Vice Chancellor at Dhaka University, was present as the Chief Guest. Guest of Honor, Mr. Ehsan Ul Fattah, Secretary at the Ministry of Youth and Sports, and Special Guest, Mrs. Rokeya Akter Begum, Principal of Viqarun Nisa Noon School and College were also present. The event was attended by students, parents, members of the press, foreign diplomats, and eminent citizens and civil society leaders of Bangladesh.

A total of 30 students were competitively selected from applications from over 92 schools and colleges for this award-winning program. These 30 of Dhaka’s best and brightest will spend a grueling month attending the after-school leadership training sessions, three hours a day, six days a week. The US Embassy in Dhaka will provide the full tuition through scholarships to the participating students.

BYLC’s leadership program has three components. The first component is what the co-founder of the program, Shammi S. Quddus of MIT, terms “building bridges”: participants from different educational backgrounds - English, Bengali and Madrassa - will learn to interact and communicate with each other by working in small groups and participating in team building exercises. Over the course of the program, they will learn to understand different voices and perspectives in society.

The second component focuses on leadership training through workshops on public speaking, lectures on the diagnostic framework of leadership, and training using different tools and techniques to effectively and courageously exercise the act of leadership for the common good.

The final component of the program consists of community service, where the participants apply their newly learned skills to find solutions to the different problems faced by a local community. This year’s community service program will be implemented in an impoverished neighborhood in Mirpur, Dhaka.

“During this defining moment in Bangladesh’s history, it is of utmost importance for the youth of Bangladesh to learn to become responsible and compassionate leaders, step out of their comfort zone and take ownership of our social problems”, said Ejaj Ahmad, president of BYLC.

Chief Guest of the ceremony, Professor A A M S Arefin Siddique, Vice Chancellor at Dhaka University said, “When you have a youth development program like Building Bridges Through Leadership Training, that has been co-founded by two young Bangladeshis from world-renowned institutions such as Harvard and MIT, our hope in our young generation and the future of Bangladesh no longer remains a distant hope but an immediate reality.”

BYLC's concept and teaching methodology was originally developed at Harvard Kennedy School's Center for Public Leadership and its first program in 2008 was supported by Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Public Service Center and Davis Peace Prize 2008.

